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OCCASIONAL REMARKS

By F. Blackburne.

UPON SOME LATE

S T R I C T U R E S

O N

The CONFESSIONAL: *h.*

Particularly in a Pamphlet, intituled,

“ DOUBTS concerning the Authenticity

“ O F

“ The last Publication of THE CONFESSIONAL, &c.”

——— *Quod cuique repertum*
Rimanti, telum IRA facit. ——— VIRG.

L O N D O N,

Printed for S. BEADON, in *Pater-noster-row.*

MDCCLXVIII.

[Price One Shilling.]

OCCASIONAL REMARKS

BY JOHN GOSSET

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

THE CONFESSION

OF THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE APOSTOLICAL

THE CONFESSION OF THE DOCTRINE

OF THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING THE APOSTOLICAL

LONDON

Printed for S. BARNES, in Pall-mall

[Price One Shilling]

OCCASIONAL REMARKS

Upon some late STRICTURES ON

The CONFESSIONAL, &c.

THAT such a book as the Confessional should be permitted to make its way in the world without warm and vigorous opposition, could never be expected by any man who had the least acquaintance with the state and temper of the times in which it appeared. It would indeed have been a weak and unreasonable expectation in *any* times, which have afforded occasion for such inquiries. The subjects there treated of, are of great and public importance. It was fit they should be seriously, freely, and thoroughly examined: and if it should be found that the Author's principles or his conclusions were destitute of all foundation, it was equally

fit that his book should be consigned to contempt and oblivion.

The merits of the main question laid within a small compass, namely, “whether the governors
“of Protestant churches have a right, upon the
“original principles of the Reformation, to establish
“confessions of faith and doctrine, drawn
“up in the form of artificial system, and in terms
“not clearly warranted by the scriptures, as tests
“of the orthodoxy of the ministers officiating in
“such churches?”

The first that appeared on the affirmative side of this question, in opposition to the Confessional, was the Reverend Dr. *Rutherford*, who endeavoured to lodge the right of establishing such tests with the governors of particular churches, in virtue of a scriptural commission or appointment, peculiar to their office and station.

To him succeeded the ingenious author of an *Essay on Establishments in religion*, who thought proper to give the civil magistrate a share of authority, along with the superior clergy, in the establishing such tests; a point the Reverend Doctor abovementioned seemed to have overlooked.

These several theories underwent candid and sensible examinations from the masterly hand of the judicious Dr. *Benjamin Dawson*, who hath laid both these schemes of church power, as these authors have drawn them out, under difficulties
from

from which it will not be easy to disengage them, upon any principles consistent with the claims and professions either of those who first separated from the church of *Rome*, or of those who have since undertaken to justify that separation, upon the surest grounds.

The Confessional, having, by the help of so able an auxiliary, and of some other intelligent and ingenuous friends of religious liberty, stood firm and unshaken by these more regular approaches, it became necessary to change the method of attack, and, as hath been usual in other polemic operations, to harraßs the author with a lighter kind of artillery, calculated to disparage his talents as a writer, and his probity as a man, and to make him contemptible and ridiculous, and if possible, scandalous.

Something of this tendency was slightly thrown out by the author of the *Essay on Establishments*, &c. But these little reflections having already fallen under the notice of the Candid Examiner of that Essay, may, for the present, be passed by.

But who would have expected that the grave Dr. *Rutherford* should condescend to engage in this kind of skirmish? or that he should introduce a formal Defence of his charge with observing, that the Confessional was *eleven years in the author's training*? Perhaps, indeed, this may be a circumstance of more consequence than one would at first

imagine. For the Reverend Mr. *Benjamin Pye*, in the Preface to his *Five Letters*, more lately published, hath thought it necessary to inform the world, with less certainty indeed as to the point of chronology, and a remarkable variation of the metaphor, that the Author of the Confessional was *more than ten years brooding over it*.

Now admit one or other of these accounts (which of them you please) to be true, what would these gentlemen infer from such remarks to the disparagement of the author or his book? From every writer who publishes his sentiments on serious and important subjects, the public has a right to expect as much accuracy as human infirmity in general, and the imperfections of particular men, will admit of. And the more time those writers take to compose, revise, and correct their performances, the more respect they shew for the public, for whose information or entertainment their labours are intended.

Possibly these gentlemen might mean, under *this* intimation, to convey *another* to their readers, that is to say, that they are writers of superior abilities, and could each of them have produced a bigger and a better book in the *eleventh* or *tenth* part of the time: which may be very true, but would have been hinted with a better grace by parties not so immediately interested to have it believed.

ERASMUS,

“ERASMUS, it is to be hoped, had too much
 “sense to value himself for reading and com-
 “posing faster than other people; but there
 “have been writers who have shewed their va-
 “nity and their infirmity in boasting of their
 “inconceivable abilities this way. The design
 “of such braggards is sometimes partly to assure
 “us how much they despise, and how easily they
 “can confute their antagonists: but the trick is
 “as stale as a rotten egg, and the learned world
 “is not to be so duped. *Θαυμαστά μυστοίς.*” *Life,*
 by Dr. Fortin, vol. I. p. 403. And so much for
 brooding and training.

Previous to Mr. Pye's *Five Letters*, appeared a
 small pamphlet, intitled, *Doubts concerning the*
authenticity of the last publication of the Confessional;
 the author of which does not seem to have en-
 tertained the least suspicion, that the opportunity
 his retirement and his library afforded him of
 lashing the Author of the Confessional, would
 be of the least disadvantage to the reputation
 either of himself or his performance; and yet
 during this employment of his learned leisure,
 he certainly was in the circumstances of a re-
 cluse. Why then is this cast off by Mr. Pye
 as a term of reproach to the Author the Con-
 fessional, not without a gird at the obscurity of
 his library?

No question but Mr. Pye thought the Author
 of the *Doubts* more laudably employed than the

Author of the Confessional; but that consideration alone will not make the *Doubter* less a *recluse* while he was occupied in this labour of love, nor at all *inlighten* the *dark corners* of his library.

But it seems Mr. *Pye* has his reasons for thus characterising the Author of the Confessional and his library more particularly, as these terms import that the said Author "may be somewhat mistaken in his opinion of men and times, and not have fallen at last upon the fittest season for communicating it to the world." *Pref.* p. iv.

In my humble apprehension the Author of the Confessional is under a small obligation to Mr. *Pye* for this last remark. It seems to carry along with it a concession that *some* season might be *fit* for communicating this opinion to the world. And this being presupposed, who is to be the judge of the *fittest season*? What if the Author of the Confessional should think, as other good Protestants do, that pleas for christian liberty, and for the advancement of truth and sincerity in christian societies, are *unfit* at *no* season? If this sentiment is just, no man who entertains it can be far mistaken in his opinion of the men who discourage such pleas, or of the times which obstruct such advancement. If Mr. *Pye* is of a different judgment, he is not a proper person to

chuse

chuse *fit seasons* for the Author of the Confessional, and the numbers that think as he does.

That the Author of the Confessional may not be frequently seen at the levees of great men, in carding parties, or other places of public resort where popular intelligence is stirring, is very possible. It may be his *misfortune* that he is not. But while he does his duty in his proper station, and gives honour to whom honour is due, it cannot be his *fault* that he does not intrude himself where his presence is neither wanted nor required; and it is not impossible that men even of study and retirement may have *other means* of learning what is doing in the world, and by whom.

The Author of the *Doubts* has dropped several hints, that the Author of the Confessional is, at the bottom, a favourer of Popery. He calls him, with an ironical sneer, a *good Protestant*, and ends his pamphlet with an insinuation, that the Author of the Confessional is ready to run into the embraces of Father *Philips*. Here Mr. *Pye* kindly becomes his voucher, that an *easiness towards Popery* is none of this Author's failings, and cites some passages from the Confessional to prove it.

It is pity these gentlemen should not communicate their respective performances to each other, before they exhibit them to the public! Who knows, if one of these writers should continue in this *doubting* humour, but he may, at some time,

time, *doubt* whether Mr. Pye did not cite the fragment he produces of Bishop Burnet's History of his *Own Times*, from a spurious or a mutilated copy? Some people indeed have thought, that, had he given the passage as it stands in the authentic editions of that History, common justice would have required, that he should chastise Bishop Burnet for the same offence which puts him so grievously out of temper with the Author of the Confessional.

But however Mr. Pye might think fit to treat the Author of the Confessional, let justice be done to Mr. Pye. Let us acknowledge the seasonable and essential service he has done to the Protestant cause, by so much of his *Five Letters* as concerns Popery and Popish writers. He deserves the thanks of all good Protestants for it. And he would have deserved them no less, had he reserved his strictures on the Author of the Confessional for some other occasion. Will not some of his Protestant readers be ready to ask, what have such strictures to do there? Does Mr. Pye mean that no body should write against Popery, without his *canonical* permission? And, considering the horrid, but very just picture he has drawn of the church of *Rome*, with what propriety can he blame the Author of the Confessional for desiring that the church of *England* may keep as far out of her way as possible?

The

The *Critical Reviewers* speak of the Author of the *Doubts* abovementioned as an *ingenious writer*, and so far I agree with them. No one but a writer of some genius could fabricate such *Doubts* out of such materials. The thing to be regretted is, that the cost bestowed upon them, light as it is, should so far outweigh the importance of them. So far as I can see, they might all be admitted for just and true without the least damage to the argument of the *Confessional*. For what do we learn from them, but that the Author of that book is, in some instances, a *fal-lible*, and, if you will, a *careless*, in others, a *confident* writer? In some instances he hath made mistakes; in others, he hath presumed to be of his own opinion, without asking leave of the *Doubter* and his associates.

But when the said *Reviewers* add, that *The passages in question are fairly cited and compared*, I must beg leave to dissent from them, and to enter an appeal to the public, on the behalf of the Author of the *Confessional*.

For example. "You tell us" (says the *Doubter*, addressing himself to the Author of the *Confessional*), "p. xxix. of the preface to the first edition, that King *Charles II* PROMISED, in his Declaration from *Breda*, two things concerning religion; the first of which was, *A quite new model of the Church of England*." *Doubts*,

The words, however, of that Preface are these:
 “ Charles II published a Declaration at Breda,
 “ giving the Presbyterians to understand two
 “ things, &c.” Now, unless it is impossible that
 people should be *given to understand*, or *made to*
expect any thing, except by a *promise* in exprefs
 words, the author of the Confessional may still
 be in the right, and even justified by the passages
 cited in the *Doubts* from this Declaration. For
 if it may be proved, 1. that the Presbyterians
 did actually *understand* by the Declaration from
Breda, that there would be a quite new model of
 the church of England; and, 2. that the King
 himself intended that *this* they should *understand*
 by it, no room will be left for cavils on this
 head.

To the first point let us hear *Richard Baxter*:
 “ In the deep sense of this danger,” says he, “ I
 “ set myself to try, whether terms of *possible con-*
 “ cord might be obtained; the London ministers
 “ joyned; the King greatly encouraged us; first
 “ by his Declaration at Breda.” *Baxter's Life*
 by *Sylvester*, Appendix, 120.

And to these terms of *possible concord* the De-
 claration from *Breda* plainly pointed; viz. “ And
 “ because the passion and uncharitableness of the
 “ times have produced several opinions in religion
 “ by which men are engaged in parties and ani-
 “ mosities against each other, which, *when they*
 “ shall hereafter unite in a freedom of conversa-
 “ tion,

tion, will be composed or better understood; We do declare a Liberty to tender Consciences," &c.

But *Baxter* and the *London* ministers very well knew, that neither these parties and animosities could be *composed*, nor any terms of *possible concord* obtained, without a quite new ^a model of the church of England. And that this indeed was the sense of all sorts, appears from the *free conversation* the same *London* ministers had with the King, concerning terms of *possible concord*, when as yet they had no public encouragement to propose such terms, but what they understood the Declaration from *Breda* had given them. *Baxter's Life*, Part II. p. 230, 231, &c.

But it may be said, "The Presbyterians *misunderstood* this Declaration." Let us, then inquire how the King intended they *should* understand it.

^a Perhaps the word *Model* may give offence to the Doubter. The Author of the Confessional, however, has pretty good authority for using it on *this* occasion, even that of Lord *Clarendon*, by whom we are informed that "a committee was appointed *before* his majesty's return to debate and prepare the "MODEL for religion." *Continuation of his Life*, 8vo, vol. II. p. 17. If this committee was appointed upon the Lords *desiring that some way may be considered to make up the breaches* (see *Whitelock*, p. 702. under *May 1, 1660*), it was immediately occasioned by his Majesty's letters and declarations from *BREDA*; and affords a full justification of the Author of the Confessional *in terminis*.

1. Along

1. Along with the Declaration from *Breda*, cited by the *Doubter*, and of the same date, came a Letter from his Majesty to the Speaker of the House of Commons (*Whitelock*, p. 702, calls it his message and *declaration* to the House of Commons), wherein his Majesty says, "We hope, in due time, ourself to propose something to you for the propagation of it" [the Protestant religion], "that will satisfy the world, that we have always made it our care and our study, and have enough observed, what is most like to bring disadvantage to it." We shall see presently, that what his Majesty had to propose, was a quite new model of the Church of England.

2. His Majesty's Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical affairs bears date *October* 25, 1660. In this Declaration we read as follows. "When we were in *Holland*, we were attended by many grave and learned ministers from hence, who were looked upon as the most able and principal assertors of the Presbyterian opinions, with whom we had as much conference as the multitude of affairs which were then upon us would permit us to have; and, to our great satisfaction and comfort, found them full of affection to us, of zeal for the peace of the church and state, and neither enemies (as they have been given out to be) to Episcopacy or Liturgy, but modestly to desire such alterations in either, as,

" without

“ without shaking foundations, might best allay
 “ the present distempers which the indisposition
 “ of the time, and the tenderness of some men’s
 “ consciences, had contracted; for the better do-
 “ ing whereof we did intend, upon our first ar-
 “ rival in this kingdom, to call a Synod of Di-
 “ vines, as the most proper expedient to provide
 “ a proper remedy for all those differences and
 “ dis-satisfactions which had or should arise in
 “ matters of religion; and IN THE MEAN TIME
 “ we published, in our Declaration from Breda,
 “ a Liberty to tender Consciences, &c.”

So then we see the *Liberty to tender Consciences*,
 published in the Declaration from *Breda*, was
 granted as a kind of *interim*, till a proper remedy
 for all those differences and dis-satisfactions which
 had arisen, or should arise, in matters of religion,
 could be provided. Thus the Presbyterians, as
 we have seen, understood this Declaration from
Breda, and in consequence of so understanding it
 were encouraged to propose their terms of *possible*
concord; and, as appears from the King’s own
 testimony, if they had not so understood it, they
 would not have understood it as his Majesty *in-*
tended they *should* understand it.

To proceed. The calling of a Synod of Divines
 appearing to his Majesty not to be a proper ex-
 pedient for the purpose of composing these differ-
 ences and dis-satisfactions at the time this Decla-
 ration concerning Ecclesiastical affairs was pub-
 lished,

lished, for reasons therein given, his Majesty takes it upon himself to give some determination, by way of concessions to the Presbyterians and other scrupulous ministers. And, lest it should be thought that these *concessions* were different from the *proposal* meditated at *Breda*, his Majesty puts that matter out of dispute in the following words. “ To conclude, and in this place to explain what we mentioned before, and said in our Letter to the House of Commons from *Breda*, that we hoped in due time ourself to propose somewhat for the propagation of the Protestant religion, &c. — We conjure all our loving subjects to acquiesce in, and submit to, this our Declaration concerning those differences, which have so much disquieted the nation at home, and given such offence to the Protestant churches abroad.”

It remains now only to be considered whether these alterations and concessions did not amount to a *quite new model of the church of England*?

And here, to avoid prolixity, I must refer the reader for particulars to the Declaration itself; and request him to compare them with the *old model*, as it was left by the Bishops of K. *Charles I.* The last of these *concessions*, indeed, the sort of men with whom the author of the Confessional hath to do, obliges me to put down at full length.

“ And

" And because some men, otherwise pious and
 " learned, say, they cannot conform unto the
 " subscription required by the Canon, nor take
 " the oath of canonical obedience, we are con-
 " tent, and it is our will and pleasure (so they
 " take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy),
 " that they shall receive ordination, institution,
 " and induction, and shall be permitted to exer-
 " cise their function, and to enjoy the profits of
 " their livings, without the said subscription or
 " oath of canonical obedience. And moreover,
 " that no persons in the universities shall, for
 " want of such subscription, be hindered in the
 " taking of their degrees. Lastly, that none be
 " judged to forfeit his presentation or benefice,
 " or be deprived of it, upon the statute of the
 " thirteenth of Queen *Elizabeth*, chapter the
 " twelfth, so he read and declare his assent to all
 " the articles of religion, *which only concern the*
 " *confession of the true Christian faith, and the*
 " *doctrine of the sacraments*, comprised in the
 " book of articles in the said statute mentioned."

Now, if this concession *alone* is not a *quite new*
model of the church of England, I must insist upon
 it that those Gentlemen who have accused the
 author of the Confessional of attempting to sub-
 vert the church of England *a fundamentis*, only
 for proposing to have the canonical subscription
 to the xxxix Articles taken away, are widely
 mistaken.

B

Great

Great as my regard is for the author of the *Doubts*, I freely own I have not taken all these pains on his account only. The last cited passage gives me an opportunity of paying my respects to a more considerable personage, under whose standard the *Doubter* may possibly have enlisted.

This little collection of *Doubts* made its appearance like one of those Dwarfs recorded in ancient romance, who strutted into the lists immediately before the Giant, partly to set off the amplitude of his person, and partly to bear some part of his light armour. Accordingly this diminutive writer having vapoured about a while, in stalks a *Terræ-filius* exhibiting his defiance, under the title of *A Letter to the Author of the Confessional, containing Remarks on the Preface to his First Edition*. In this Letter the concessions and alterations in King Charles II'd's *Declaration concerning Ecclesiastical affairs* are thus represented.

“ The King was, *in the main*, for restoring the
 “ establishment; as it was before the year 1640;
 “ yet in testimony of his desire of peace and union,
 “ *if by such means it could be obtained*, he con-
 “ sented to restrain the Episcopal jurisdiction, to
 “ permit the Liturgy to be altered, and to in-
 “ dulge the scrupulous in several instances, with
 “ respect to ceremonies and ecclesiastical habits.”

P. 47.

Warily, good Sir! Take heed how you go on;
 not a syllable of removing the bulwark of sub-
 scriptions

scriptions for ever so much, lest somebody should ask, how the establishment stood in this *main point* before the year 1640?

And then again, *If by such means it could be obtained.* But why are we not told what prevented its being obtained by *such means*? For a very good reason. That circumstance belongs to the defence of the *Preface*. And, as the representation now stands, you may, if you please, ascribe this prevention to the obstinacy of the Presbyterians. Bishop Burnet, however, shews a fairer side of them. “The Earl of Clarendon,” says his Lordship, “got the King to publish a Declaration, soon after his restoration, concerning ecclesiastical affairs, to which *if he had stood*, very probably the greatest part of them might have been gained.”—— So then this treaty of *peace and union* did not miscarry on the side of the Presbyterians. But pray, why did not the King stand to his Declaration? The Historian honestly tells us. “The Bishops did not approve of it.” *Hist. O. T. Fol. vol. I. p. 178.*

But, lest Bishop Burnet's authority should be disputed, let us hear what account the Presbyterians themselves give by the pen of *Richard Baxter*, in a petition intended to be presented to the King, about the year 1675.

“And the grief of our souls for the present divisions doth call up our thankful remembrance — that your Majesty published so gracious a

“ Declaration of ecclesiastical affairs, as, *had it*
 “ *lived, had prevented our present distractions*, yea,
 “ that your House of Commons gave your Ma-
 “ jesty the [their] public thanks for your healing
 “ means; tho’ some now take all our divisions
 “ and distractions to be a smaller evil than the
 “ terms of that your Majesty’s Declaration would
 “ be.” *Baxter’s Life*, Part III. p. 564. [mis-
 numbered for 164.]

This is a specimen of the many artifices with which this *Letter* abounds. What a pleasant variety of *doubts* might a man form out of it, who should be blessed with the happy vein of the facetious artist upon the carpet? In sober sadness, these *softeners* do by no means become so solemn a reprover of disingenuity, and so magisterial a corrector of false history.

The next offence that is given to the *Doubter* is, that the author of the Confessional does not pay due respect to the authorities of *Heylin* and *Plaifere* concerning the Declaration at the head of the xxxix Articles.

What *Plaifere* says amounts only to this, that the said Declaration was prefixed to the Articles in his time, and had King *Charles’s* authority, which will by no means prove that it was *not* there in the foregoing reign, or that it had *not* King *James’s* authority as well as King *Charles’s*. Suppose the *Doubter* should have occasion to say, in some of his learned labours, “ Moreover, the
 “ King’s

“King’s most excellent Majesty *that now is*, in
 “his Proclamation for the Encouragement of
 “Piety and Virtue, &c.” would he expect that
 Posterity should take this for sufficient proof that
 this Proclamation was *not* published by any of his
 Majesty’s Royal Predecessors?

Doctor *Heylin* indeed exhibits this Declaration
 from a book intituled *Bibliotheca Regia*, which
 was probably a collection of public rescripts of
 several sorts, during the reign of King *Charles*;
 some of which, for aught that appears, might
 only have been *republished* in this Collection, as
 what King *Charles* might think fit to *confirm* by
 his own authority, tho’ first issued in his Father’s
 reign.

Be that as it may, the works of both these
 writers were extant in the days of Bishop *Burnet*
 and Dr. *Nichols*; and as neither of the latter seem
 to have paid any regard to these testimonies, the
 authorities of *Plaifere* and *Heylin* could not pre-
 clude the author of the Confessional from the
 liberty of choosing his party in the matter in dif-
 ference between the Bishop and Dr. *Nichols*;
 which he hath done, one would have thought,
 with sufficient diffidence to have protected him
 from the insult of any one pretending to the name
 of a scholar and a gentleman.

“*But*,” as the *Doubter* goes on, “*this is not*
 “*the point*,” and a much more formidable accu-
 sation is brought against the author of the Con-
 fessional.

“ In your’s” (meaning, in the copy of the Declaration used by the author of the Confessional),
 “ it seems his Majesty does not say that, He had
 “ caused a Declaration made and published by
 “ himself, for the purposes mentioned in the
 “ Proclamation, to be printed and published
 “ along with the thirty-nine Articles.” *Doubts*,
 p. 5.

To judge of the *fairness* of this citation, we must put down the passage as it stands in the Confessional, p. 132, note, Ed. 2.

“ You will say perhaps, and why might not
 “ this originally be King *Charles’s* own *Declara-*
 “ *tion*? I answer, it might be so; but if it was,
 “ it is unaccountable his Majesty should not say,
 “ IN THE PASSAGE ABOVE-CITED, he had caused
 “ a Declaration made and published by himself,
 “ for the purposes mentioned in the Proclamation,
 “ to be printed and published along with a new
 “ edition of the thirty-nine Articles.”

Now so it happens, that the *passage above-cited* was not from the *Declaration* before the Articles, but from the *Proclamation* calling in the copies of Montague’s *Appello Cæsarem*, mentioned p. 131. Had the *Doubter* given the least hint of a *passage above-cited*, the reader perhaps might have gone to the Confessional to look for it, which would have been absolute destruction to the *Doubt*. The *Doubter* therefore, in his great *accuracy* and *clearness*, thought fit to drop this little clause as nothing to his purpose.

The

The next doubt is one of the most extraordinary in the whole collection. According to *Rusworth*, the House of Commons put the very same construction upon his Majesty's Declaration that Sir *John Elliot* did; and, in consequence of that construction, entered into a remarkable *Vow*, plainly to guard against the design of the Declaration, and to take care that *the power of religion might not be left to the persons of those men to whom the Declaration left it*. *Rusworth*, vol. I. p. 649, 650.

Let us now attend to the words of the Declaration which may be supposed to have given occasion to this construction, which I transcribe from Dr. *Heylin's* copy (taken from the *Bibliotheca Regia* above-mentioned), now lying before me.

"That out of our Princely care that the
 "Church-men may do the work which is proper unto
 "them, the Bishops and Clergie, from time to time,
 "upon their humble desire, shall have licence,
 "under our Broad Seal, to deliberate of, and to
 "do all such things, as being made plain by them,
 "and assented unto by us, SHALL concern the
 "settled continuance of the Doctrine and Disci-
 "pline of the Church of *England* established; from
 "which we shall not endure any variation or de-
 "parting in the least degree." *Life of Arch-
 bishop Laud*, p. 188, 189.

The question is, from *what* the King would not endure any variation or departing in the least degree?

The *Doubter* answers, "In the *Doctrine* of the Church, he declares he will admit of no variation from what was ALREADY established." *Doubts*, p. 9.

In an evil hour for his cause did the *Doubter* refer us to *Heylin's* transcript of this Declaration from *Bibliotheca Regia*; for, alas! neither the word NOW in the passage as cited by the *Doubter*, nor the word ALREADY, as in his Comment, is to be found in the said transcript.

Indeed, in Bishop *Sparrow's* Collection of *Articles, Injunctions, &c.* and in the common editions, the words are—"of the Church of *England* NOW established," which was probably first put there to accommodate matters to the Act of Uniformity of 1662. But the Declaration with which we have to do, is that and that only under the consideration of the House of Commons in 1628, of which this from Dr. *Heylin* must be taken for an authentic copy, till the contrary is proved. The omission of the word NOW in *Heylin's* copy can hardly pass for an error of the pen or the press; for the word ALREADY, which is in *Sparrow's* copy below, is not to be found in that given by *Heylin*. The author of the Confessional indeed (*then* probably unapprised of this very remarkable difference between the copies) appeals to the Declaration, *as we now have it*. And surely with sufficient reason, upon the supposition that the Declaration must be consistent with itself.

For,

For, admit the word now to have been in the original Declaration in the sense of *already*, what things were the Bishops and Clergy in Convocation to *deliberate of*, what were they to *do*, or to *make plain from time to time*, respecting either doctrine or discipline, seeing his Majesty would not endure any *varying in the least degree* from what was *now* or *already* established?

“The external policy of the church,” says the *Doubter*, and strains hard to find a distinction between *external policy* and *essential discipline*. But all in vain; the word *essential* is his own interpolation, and in the passage quoted above from the Declaration, *Doctrine* and *Discipline* go hand in hand. If the Church-men might not vary the *Doctrine*, neither might they vary the *Discipline* *already* established; and then, there being *no work proper unto Church-men* to be done, upon what was his Majesty’s *Princely care* to be employed?

But if the Discipline might be varied, so might the Doctrine too under the same restrictions. The consequence is, that *that* from which his Majesty would not endure any variation in the least degree, was the result of the clergy’s *deliberations*, what they should *do*, or what they should *make plain, from time to time*, concerning the settled continuance both of the doctrine and discipline of the church of *England*. The plain *English* of which our sensible ancestors of those times knew to be,
that

that the King's sanction to these convocational acts being presupposed, concerning which there was no question to be made, no man would be allowed to vary in the least degree, either in doctrine or discipline, from what the clergy should please to *make plain*; an expression which sufficiently pointed out the tendency of the Declaration to the House of Commons, and still points it out to every reader who is at all acquainted with the history of those times.

In the Confessional, p. 30, 2d Ed. is this note: "The late Bishop *Conybeare*, in his famous Subscription-sermon, argues from the consent required by the Apostles to their doctrines, to the consent required by succeeding Church-governors to human articles."

For which the author is thus taken to task: "Bishop *Conybeare* is apt to lay a sure foundation, and to build regularly and firmly upon it. His stile and manner of building are indeed, as masters differ, not much like the Confessional; but such as they are in his other productions, such they appear in this sermon, in which, *as I have it*, there is not any the least trace of such argumentation as is here imputed to him." *Doubts*, p. 11.

I must own, I am one among those who have thought the text of every good sermon to be the *foundation* of the preacher's doctrine contained in it. Bishop *Conybeare's* text at the head of his sermon

sermon on Subscription is, as I remember (for I have not the sermon at hand), 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. *If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing.*

Now, what can be built upon this foundation to authorise the requiring consent to *any* articles of religion, without some proof that they who require such consent, act by the same authority that the Apostle *Paul* did in requiring consent to the *wholesome words* mentioned in the text?

This is so natural and proper a question upon the occasion that the *Doubter* himself endeavours to break the force of it, by saying, “And yet, as a true scholar does not judge of a discourse by reading only the *title* and *text*, nor a fair critic report that it contains what it does not contain, here is a difficulty which I know not how to solve;” — why truly, nor I neither; for if a sermon hath *no trace* in it of what a true scholar or fair critic would expect from the title and the text, it will be very difficult to conceive, that the preacher’s foundation should be *surely laid*, and much more that what he builds upon it should be *regular* and *firm*. But this, it seems, is Bishop *Conybeare*’s manner of building, in which I dare venture to say, the Author of the Confessional hath no ambition to follow him. Is it for the honour of Bishop *Conybeare*, either
as

as a divine or a reasoner, to suppose he took for granted a point of such indispensable consequence to the cause he was pleading in that sermon, as *apostolical authority*?

The Author of the Confessional, p. 310. 2d Edition, hath unwarily said, that "Dr. *Waterland* recommended Bishop *Sanderſon's* Nine Cases of "Conscience in his *Advice to young Students*." It is a palpable mistake; and whether incurred by misinformation or misapprehension, the effect of an highly blameable negligence, inasmuch as it is no small reflection upon the said Doctor, to suppose him to have been so injudicious as to recommend that kind of sophistical jargon as a proper study for the younger part of the university. Nor indeed, notwithstanding Mr. *Boyle's* high opinion of Bishop *Sanderſon's* casuistical talents, can I commend Dr. *Waterland's* judgment in recommending the said Bishop's *Prælections* to young students.

This, however, will not excuse the Author of the Confessional for his incautious imputation. But I will venture to say for him, that had he been apprised of his error, he would readily have acknowledged and corrected it in the second edition of his book, with thanks for the information, even though conveyed in no gentler terms than those of the *Doubter*.

The next occasion of *doubt* arises from hence, that whereas Dr. *Waterland* had said, "By com-
2 " *pilers*

“ *compilers*. I mean those that composed the creeds,
 “ articles, or other forms received in our church.
 “ By *imposers* I understand the governors in
 “ church and state for the time being ;” the Au-
 thor of the Confessional, remarking upon a pas-
 sage immediately following this description of
 compilers and imposers, and where the word *im-*
posers was used, had said, “ By imposers, I ap-
 “ prehend must be meant the ministerial imposers,
 “ that is, the bishops, they being the persons
 “ appointed by law to take this security of sub-
 “ scription, on behalf of the church.”

Upon which, thus the *Doubter*. “ Now the
 “ bishops not being *governors in church and state*
 “ *for the time being*, it is evident that the Doctor
 “ could not confine his view to them, when he
 “ *first* composed this, and indeed some of the
 “ following chapters.” *Doubts*, p. 15.

But to whatever the Doctor confined his *view*,
 the passage cited from him confines his *meaning*
 to some persons under the name of *imposers*,
 distinct from the governors in church and state
collectively ; as *that* passage exhibits a case in
 which the governors in church and state *collec-*
tively, cannot be considered as imposers.

For having said, “ By *imposers* I understand the
 “ governors in church and state for the time be-
 “ ing,” the Doctor immediately goes on thus.
 “ The sense of the compilers, *barely considered*,
 “ is not *always* to be observed, but so far only,

“as the natural and proper signification of the
 “ words, and the *intention* of the imposers, binds
 “ it upon us.”

Here then a subscriber wants to know, how far, in a particular case, he is bound to observe the sense of the compilers, *barely considered!* What is he to do? He hesitates concerning the natural and proper signification of the words, and there remains nothing to determine him but the *intention* of the imposers. And where shall he find these imposers? Shall he go to the governors in church and state *collectively*, or, what is the same thing, in their *legislative* capacity, for a resolution of his scruple? Suppose this to be practicable, the answer would be, “You are mistaken
 “ in your application, we impose or bind nothing
 “ upon you but the *act* of subscribing the ar-
 “ ticles of religion. If you want to know any
 “ thing concerning senses and intentions, with re-
 “ spect to particular articles, you must apply
 “ elsewhere.” Now, if there really were no imposers to signify this *intention* to the scrupulous subscribers, it was absurd in Dr. *Waterland* to propose a case where the intervention of such imposers was made necessary; and, in my humble opinion, the Author of the Confessional does not injure Dr. *Waterland's* reputation, in *apprehend-
 ing* that the Doctor must have meant the bishops, considered as *ministerial* imposers, as there was

no other way of saving the Doctor from the imputation of glaring impropriety.

In what then has the Author of the Confessional been to blame, unless it is, that he did not censure Doctor *Waterland*, for writing with so little precision, and omitted to entertain his readers with some ingenious *Doubts* concerning the Doctor's *view*, in omitting to make a distinction where he ought to have made it?

The next article of impeachment is, that the Author of the Confessional is *uncertain* in one place, and *certain* in another, who compiled King *Edward VI's* Articles of Religion, which is thus introduced.

“ When you are arguing against Bishop *Burnet*, who believed our articles to be framed by *Cranmer* and *Ridley*, you represent it as an uncertain point by whom they were composed.”
Doubts, p. 16.

Observe, candid reader: The Gentleman does not *say*, though he would have you think he *means*, that the Author of the Confessional argues against *that* belief of Bishop *Burnet*. He only tells you, that the Author of the Confessional argues against Bishop *Burnet*, *who believed* — many things, no question, besides the proposition against which the Author of the Confessional is arguing.

The Bishop had said that, “ the compilers of our articles resolved on composing them with
“ great

"great temper in many points." But of two methods of compiling the articles, the Bishop thinks one of them barely *more probable* than the other; which leaves it *uncertain*, in the Bishop's opinion, *by whom*, as well as *in what manner* they were compiled. Whereupon the Author of the Confessional remarks, with respect to this uncertainty of the Bishop, that, "it might be the other way;" and asks, by way of argument *ad hominem*, "under this uncertainty, who can pretend to say with what temper they were composed, or by what views and considerations the composers were influenced?" Reasoning thus against the Bishop's opinion (and against *that* only), that "the articles were composed with great temper in many points," for which assertion his Lordship, being under such uncertainty, *how* and *by whom* the articles were compiled, could have no sufficient foundation.

But the Author of the Confessional, expressing his own sentiments in his argument against Dr. Nichols, adopts Bishop Burnet's opinion, so far as relates to *Cranmer*, as a certainty, without the least hesitation, and by this opinion he abides; having indeed never given the least colour to question his own certainty about the matter, till the Doubter by sophisticating his argument against Bishop Burnet thought fit so to misrepresent him.

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The *Doubter* goes on. "In an argument levelled against Dr. Bennet, I find this remark upon some position of the said Doctor, that it is contrary to his repeated interpretations in his *directions*, against the confinement of the words themselves; and *contrary to his Majesty's Declaration.*" Doubts, p. 18.

I pass over the *fairness* of this citation, as a matter of no great moment, and only observe that the last words are brought as inconsistent with what the Author of the Confessional had said elsewhere, namely, that the King's Declaration is a *rescript of no manner of validity*.

Would not the *Doubter* be understood that this Declaration was of force when Dr. Bennet wrote his Essay? and that therefore he was then at liberty to refer to it, as a public instrument of *legal authority*? This, however, the Doctor does, by arguing, after citing a passage from it, that "the sense of the subscription does and *must* continue the same, and necessarily imply a belief of the truth of the articles." *Essay*, p. 423.

It is true, Dr. Bennet concludes thus from a position, that, "all our laws do speak this language without the least variation to this day." But if the Author of the Confessional knows of no such laws, he is sufficiently justified in denying the validity of this declaration, upon the authority of those laws now in full force, which *do endure* variation from the doctrine and discipline

cipline of the church of *England*, and have taken off the penalties heretofore enacted for such variation, namely, the laws tolerating Protestant Dissenters, and superseding the *church's censure in the commission ecclesiastical* mentioned in the Declaration.

The case standing thus, whatever opinion the Author of the Confessional might entertain of the validity of this Declaration, as it was, in the opinion of Dr. *Bennet*, of full force when he wrote upon the articles, his contradiction in *one* place to its contents, which he had in *another* acknowledged to be *authoritative*, was properly urged as an instance of the said Doctor's *fluctuating casuistry* on the subject of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles. The Author of the Confessional hath, in the same passage, observed Dr. *Bennet's* contradiction to his own *Directions*. Is it necessary, to make that Author consistent with himself, that he should *approve* of those *directions*?

Next followeth another charge of inconsistency to this effect: "The Author of the Confessional
 "has argued against the *restrained* sense that
 "Dr. *Nichols* had put upon the XXIII^d Article,
 "namely, that, by those men who are there
 "mentioned to have public authority given unto
 "them in the congregation, to call and send
 "ministers into the Lord's vineyard, the compilers meant bishops *only*, and has contended
 "for a more *general* sense of that article, taking
 "in

“in the ministers of other congregations, whether called and sent by bishops or not. But the same Author of the Confessional has elsewhere argued against admitting *general senses*, or putting any latitude upon any of the articles, binding down subscribers to the strict and restrained sense of the compilers. And consequently is inconsistent with himself.” See *Doubts*, p. 19—23.

This, I think, is the substance of the *Doubt*, which the reader may see drawn out into an artful and circumstantial detail in the *Doubts*, as above-cited.

Without spending time in criticising this detail, which, however, is a *fair mark*, let us content ourselves with exhibiting a plain state of the case.

Bishop *Burnet* had said that the compilers of the articles “had resolved to compose them with great temper in *many* speculative points.” *Hist. Reform.* vol. II. p. 169.

This opinion has been adopted by many succeeding divines of different denominations, who accordingly have put in their claim for a latitude of interpretation of the articles with respect to *such* points, under different modifications.

One of these divines was Dr. *Nichols*, who supported his opinion that the articles were *purposely* drawn up in general terms, on the consideration that the compilers and first subscribers

had been differently educated, and, consequently, were differently principled with respect to these speculative points.

To this the Author of the Confessional, who thought that none of the articles were *purposely* drawn up in general terms, opposes a matter of fact, namely, that the articles were drawn up by *Cranmer* and perhaps some few of his particular friends of the same judgment in these speculative matters with himself: and the author accounts for the subscribers of those days acquiescing in the sense of those compilers, from inducements which may be supposed to have prevailed with some other subscribers in the same circumstances in more modern times.

The reader will be pleased here to observe, that the question is concerning the sense of the compilers, in points wherein Protestants might differ without departing from the principles of their common profession.

But though these divines contend that *some* of the articles were drawn up in general terms on purpose to admit of different senses, yet none of them hold that this was the case with *all* of them; and Dr. *Nichols* himself says, that "any person who believes the Popish doctrines of *Purgatory*, "*Transubstantiation*, *Invocation of saints*, &c. cannot sincerely subscribe to these articles which "*do expressly condemn these doctrines.*" Which plainly implies that, even in the Doctor's opinion,

nor.c

none of *these* articles will admit of the latitude contended for.

And indeed, it would have been very strange, if *Protestant* compilers had composed XXXIX Articles of religion, with a view of condemning the doctrines of Popery, and yet that there should be none among these articles which Protestants of all denominations could subscribe in the same uniform sense in which the compilers intended they should be understood.

No Protestant, for instance, of whatever denomination, will scruple to assent to the sixth of these articles, affirming that *holy scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation*, &c. which was opposed to the Popish doctrine, that holy scripture doth *not* contain all things necessary to salvation, as not containing the traditions and interpretations of the church.

Of the same sort is the latter period of the XXIII^d Article. Popery teaches, that no man can have a lawful vocation to minister in any congregation, unless he is called and sent by the church of *Rome* with the Pope at its head.

The compilers of the XXIII^d Article, on the contrary, assert, that, "we ought to judge those lawfully called and sent, which be chosen and called to this work by men who have public authority given unto them in the congregation, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard."

This being so, to suppose the compilers to have limited this authority to a congregation of *Episcopalians* only, would be to suppose them to have renounced the authority of the Pope of *Rome*, that they might set up the authority of a Pope of their own in some other place.

Yet for this limitation *Dr. Nichols* contends; and his reason is, that the article was composed by *episcopal* men. Whereupon the Author of the Confessional returns upon him his own supposition, that other articles were expressed in general terms, accommodated to the different education and principles of the several subscribers, some of whom, he tells us, were not a little wedded to *Calvin's* form of church discipline.

In what, now, in all this, is the Author of the Confessional *inconsistent*, unless his adopting *Dr. Nichols's* inconsistency is a necessary consequence of his *exposing* it? Or unless those may be, called *general terms purposely* contrived in a *Protestant* article, which will admit of no different senses but where one side must renounce *Protestant*, and espouse *Popish* principles.

The Author of the Confessional had said, p. 100, ed. 2d. — "It is not clear, to me at least, that he [*Bishop Burnet*] thought even the imputation of idolatry, occasioned by the worship of the Son, a sufficient reason for adding the words, *of the same substance with the Father*, to the creeds of the Christian church."

But

But the Doubter will have it that this *was* clear to the Author of the Confessional, and insinuates that the said Author was only playing the Jesuit, and, to support his charge, cites a long passage from Bishop *Burnet*, which he thinks, I suppose, puts the matter out of dispute. *Doubts*, p. 23 — 25.

But had the *Doubter* done what the Author of the Confessional did, and cast his eye towards the top of the page of Bishop *Burnet's* Introduction from whence he took this citation, he might, with a little consideration, have saved himself the trouble of transcribing so much of what he found below.

The Bishop there says, "It had been an un-
"valuable blessing, if the Christian religion had
"been kept in its first simplicity."

Suppose Bishop *Burnet* had been asked where the Christian religion in its first simplicity might be found? I take it for granted he would have answered, In the New Testament. Suppose it had been farther demanded of him, whether the words in question, applied as they were in the creeds, were to be found in the New Testament? He must have answered in the negative; and have owned at the same time, that these creeds deviated in this article from the *first simplicity* of the Christian religion. If therefore the Bishop thought the reasons given in the *Doubter's* long citation sufficient to justify the addition of those words, he must have thought that addition a blessing equally valuable at least, as the keeping
C 4 the

the Christian religion in its first simplicity. For if the Christian religion was more valuable *before* than *after* the addition, no reasons in the world could be sufficient to justify the making it. What the Bishop's sentiments were as to the *bleſſing* of this addition, may be seen in the reflections he makes upon the consequences of it, which immediately follow the *Doubter's* citation.

I lay no great stress here upon what Bishop *Burnet* knew as well as any one, that the addition of the word *μονοθεῖς* to the creed does not appear to have been made upon the considerations mentioned by his Lordship. The word was adopted by the *Nicene Council*, which was summoned to settle the disputes that had arisen between *Alexander* Bishop of *Alexandria* and *Arius*, upon what occasion is not known. (*Incertum qua occasione*, says *Mosheim*. *Inst. Hist. Eccles.* p. 165). — I lay no great stress, I say, upon this, because I am not disputing with Bishop *Burnet*, but with the Author of the *Doubts*. This however may be inferred from it, that if the reasons suggested by the Bishop was not sufficient to justify the addition, his Lordship knew of none else that would be.

What wonder then that the Author of the Confessional, laying these things together, and knowing Bishop *Burnet's* manner of stating arguments on all subjects that came before him, should take the liberty of expressing *his doubts* on this as other men may do on other subjects, whether the

the Bishop was not, in this long passage, rather offering the best reason he could think of on the behalf of those who introduced into the creed these additional words, than offering this reason as sufficient in his own opinion to warrant such addition, which indeed he can hardly be supposed to have done consistently with his declaring, that *it had been an unvaluable blessing, if the Christian religion had been kept in its first simplicity.*

The next occasion given to the *Doubter* by the Author of the Confessional, arises from what the latter says, p. 182. edit. 2d. that, "*Hell* and *inferi* never signified any thing in the days of the compilers, but the place of torment."

Had the Author of the Confessional thought it possible there should be a *Doubter* in the three kingdoms capable of taking the reign of *Henry VIII* into the days of the compilers of the *Articles*, he would probably have specified more precisely the days he meant: and have satisfied his readers by referring them to *Nowel's Catechism*, to *Peter Martyr*, cited by Dr. *Nichols*, to Bishop *Bilson*, and several other approved and orthodox writers of those times.

Luckily, however, for the Author of the Confessional, the good Bishop *Burnet* comes in to his aid, and seconds his assertion with advantage, by going backwards far beyond the days of *Henry VIIIth*, and forwards even to his own times. "The *Greek* word, says the Bishop, so rendered
" [Hell]

"[*Hell*] does now commonly stand for the
 "place of the damned, and for *many* ages has
 "been so understood." *Exposition*, p. 58. And
 so consequently has been the *English* word by
 which the *Greek* word is rendered: which I men-
 tion by way of apprising the Author of the
Doubts, that the *Greek* word *ᾗδης* is the word in
 the Septuagint, for *Hell*, in all the passages of
Job and the *Psalms* he hath cited.

But it is quite proper the *Doubter* should bring
 himself out to the reader's view upon this impor-
 tant occasion. Thus then he:

"The translation of the great *English* Bible, the
 "Psalter of which is still retained in the Book of
 "Common Prayer, was set forth and used in the
 "time of K. *Henry* the eighth, and *Edward* the
 "sixth. These, I presume, were the days of the
 "compilers, and that the word *Hell* signified in
 "their days, what it is *made* to signify in this
 "translation." *Doubts*, p. 26.

The instance is, *JOB* xiv. 13. *O that thou woldest
 kepe and hyde me in the Hell, untill thy wrath were
 styllled.*

"It is certain," saith the *Doubter*, "that the
 "translator of this verse in *Job*, by the word
 "*Hell*, meant *not* the place of torments."

But who can be *certain* of this, but he who is
certain what the translator *did* mean? And this,
 it seems, is *not* the *Doubter*, for thus he goes on
 — "but either the *grave*, or the *place* or *state*
 "of the dead."

[*Hell*] " I

That

That is to say, the translator either meant something, or he meant some other thing, or lastly, something else, which it seems is his way of proving the *certainty* that the translator did *not* mean something different from all three.

But now suppose somebody should come and tell him, that, *The Hell*, in the days of the compilers (taking in the compass the *Doubter* hath done) signified *Purgatory*, and should cite this passage of *Job* out of the great Bible to prove it? What would he say to him?

Probably he would alledge, that "the *Compilers* were Reformers, and that Reformers did not believe *Purgatory*, nor would set translators to work that did."

As by the cast of his conclusions the *Doubter* seems to be somewhat in this way of thinking, let us look a little into the character of this translation as well as of the men under whose patronage it came forth.

"Some exceptions," says *Fuller*, "being taken at *Tindal's* translation, the bishops (then generally Popish) complied so far, in a conference, with the desires of King *Henry* the eighth, that on condition the people would give in *Tindal's* [pretended false] translation, they would set forth another, better agreeing with the original. And although this took up some time to effect, the work being great in itself, and few workmen as yet, masters of the mystery of printing, yet at last it was accomplished, but

"but more purely and perfectly done in after-ages."

Church History, Book VII. p. 387.

This Bible came out in 1541, and having these patrons, among whom *Bonner* was none of the least considerable, we may be pretty certain *Purgatory* was not one of the doctrines this translation was intended to discountenance. *Hell* and *infern* in those days, often signified *Purgatory*^b, as well as the region of final punishment. And who can say that the translator of the book of *Job* did not consider *The Hell* in which *Job* desired to be hidden, under the idea of *Purgatory*?

But when the Reformation had taken deeper root, and the doctrine of *Purgatory* was totally discarded, namely, at the time when King *Edward's* articles were compiled, and for many years after, the word *Hell* will be found to be invariably taken for the place of final punishment, in all theological writings of authority.

Let us go on with the *Doubter*. "And the same thing is highly probable" (not equally certain it seems), "of the translator of these and

^b The learned Dr. *Jortin*, *Life of Erasmus*, vol. I. p. 114: had translated the words *apud inferos pœna*, from *Bembo's* History of *Venice*, by the pains of *Hell*. He was advertised that it should rather have been the pains of *Purgatory*; and, tho' he acquiesced in the correction, yet he adds, "I might plead that our English word *Hell* is lax enough to answer to *infern*, or to all the supposed districts of the infernal regions:" *Ibid.* vol. II. Appendix, p. 712—Consequently to *Purgatory*. *BEMBUS* died in the year 1547. *Bayle*.

other

“other passages of the *Psalms*, where *The Grave* “is substituted for *Hell* in the last translation.”

And is not *The Grave* substituted for *The Hell* in the last translation of *Job* xiv. 13? And if this circumstance reduces his *certainty* to a *probability* in one case, why not in the other? One thing indeed is certain in both cases, that the last translators knowing that the word *Hell* conveyed no other idea to the *English* reader, but that of a *place of torment*, which is not the meaning of the original word, they very wisely substituted the word *Grave* in its room.

As to the word *Hell*, continuing in the old translation of the *Psalms*, which is still used in our public service, I can only say, I am sorry such an instance should appear of our backwardness to correct improprieties of that kind in our forms of public worship.

The candid reader is now left to judge what room the *Doubter* had to insult the Author of the Confessional, on his being unacquainted with the different translations of the scriptures.

Finally, Doctor *Bennet*, commenting on the third article in his *Directions*, &c. will have it, that “the church *excludes* that sense of the word “*Hell*, which says that by *Hell* is meant the “*Grave*.”

In this matter the Author of the Confessional says, that Dr. *Bennet* is contrary to Dr. *Clarke*. Whereas the *Doubter* affirms they are *very good friends*,

friends, and cites some instances from each of them to prove it.

True, *very good friends* in their explanation of the word *Hell*. But is this the point in which the Author of the Confessional said they disagreed? Or has Dr. *Clarke* any where said, that, "The church *excludes* that sense of the word *Hell* which says that *Hell* signifies *The Grave*?"

Let Dr. *Clarke* speak for himself. "That sense in which any human forms appear to a *man's self* to be consistent with scripture, and not the *presumed meaning* of the compilers, is to be the rule and measure of his understanding them, is evident both in reason (because otherwise every human government makes a new rule of faith) and is moreover by all Protestants agreed upon without controversy in practice. For the article in the Apostle's Creed, concerning Christ's descent into *Hell*, is now universally understood in a sense probably different from what the composers of the creed intended." *Reply to Nelson*, p. 33, 34.

Now unless it is impossible that the word *Hell*, in the article or the creed, taken in the sense of *The Grave*, should appear to *any man's self* to be more consistent with scripture than *The state of separate souls*, or any other sense, put upon the word *Hell*, or unless the *tautology* mentioned in Dr. *Clark's* catechism, is to be taken as the reason why the church (which, I apprehend, is a human

human government within the Doctor's meaning) does, and as a sufficient reason why she should *exclude* the sense in question, Dr. *Clarke* must either be at variance with Dr. *Bennet* on this point of exclusion, or at variance with himself.

Thus have we waded through these *Doubts* with sufficient patience and perseverance, leaving the *wit* and *spirit* of the author, abstracted from his *reasoning*, to make what impressions they may upon the candid and intelligent reader, who may perhaps have expected a little more knowledge of his subjects from a writer that makes so desperate an attack upon an author's reputation who does not seem to have deserved it. In all such cases, however, it is, and it always will be true, that, where the design is only to *disparage* and *defame*, *An ounce of Mother, is worth a pound of Clergy.*

As to this method of *doubting*, the experiment, as I remember, was first tried upon the *Estimate* of a late unfortunate author; by a masterly and not illiberal hand; and the effect *those* *Doubts* had upon the vogue of the said *Estimate*, may probably enough be supposed to have had some share, among many other mortifications, in bringing on that dejection which is said to have so unhappily affected the spirits of that ill-starred, but very ingenious writer, and, in other respects, valuable man.

What

What effects of the like kind might be expected from the Doubts we have been considering, one cannot certainly say. The *Doubter* talks somewhere, *as if the mistakes* of the Author of the Confessional were *fatal* to him, an expression that may be differently understood. Be that as it may, the Author of *these* Doubts should have considered, that imitations of applauded originals seldom succeed with the public, when they come from second-rate writers; there is a spirit of genius and delicacy in such originals (particularly of the ironical kind) which the ordinary talents of a mere imitator cannot catch, and for which he is obliged to substitute a spirit of another sort, impatient of being covered by the comic mask, and discovering itself at every turn for the genuine spirit of wrath and resentment.

Misrepresentations, however, let them be conveyed in what way you will, when they strike at the *moral character* of the party misrepresented, are serious things; and the particular virulence with which the insinuations of that tendency in *these Doubts* are thrown out against the Author of the Confessional, made it in some measure necessary that the public should be apprised to what they really amount.

It is true, writers against that book, of a more consequential figure, have not been sparing in *personal reflections*. But as these were probably intended only as a kind of crutches to help on
here

here and there a lame argument for subscriptions, the consideration of them may be postponed till it becomes reasonable for the Author to review those arguments.

I say till it becomes *reasonable*, that is to say, till these argumentative gentlemen have reconciled the jarring and contradictory principles and interpretations they have respectively played against the Confessional, and brought them to a perfect agreement one with another.

It was very easy to foresee that men who hardly agreed in any thing else, would agree in attacking the Confessional and disparaging the Author of it, and that their disagreements must break out in the course of the controversy; and so it hath proved.

There is no such thing, for example, as making room for Professor *Rutherford's* independent churches in the theory of the *Essayist* on *Establishments*. On another hand, the latitude allowed by the *Pleader* for subscriptions, is utterly subversive of the said Professor's *Testwork*.

There cannot well be a more decisive argument than may be drawn from the circumstances of these and other disagreements among them, that all their defences of subscription are defective. And yet, as these gentlemen are only particular doctors, they are only at liberty to disown each other, as occasion is given; not to mention that

some future doctor may arise who will disown them both.

There are, too, among the adversaries of the Confessional, who want to be reconciled to themselves. Of this class is the *Letter-writer* and *Remarker on the preface to the first edition of the Confessional*. He deals chiefly in *bye-matters*, and these he treats in a *bye-way* of his own, so that you cannot be certain whither he is bound, or by what church-system he will abide. Sometimes he reproves the Author of the Confessional with magisterial severity as too much a friend to the dissenters, only for exposing the iniquity of their ancient persecutors. On other occasions he seems disposed to coax the dissenters in a way that puts one in mind of, *If we had lived in the days of our forefathers, &c.*

What hope can a man, who commits himself with such opponents, have, that the controversy will ever be brought to a fair issue, or indeed to any issue at all? Or who that can employ himself with any sort of advantage either to himself or the public in studies of another sort, would waste his fleeting hours in such fruitless altercation?

Who, for instance, that does not hold his time the cheapest of all his worldly goods, would contend with a man, who, at this time of the day, shews an inclination to support the narrow-hearted,

and

and more than semipagan notion of *religion*, entertained by the convocation-men of 1689.

In what way can you deal, or upon what common principles can you argue, with a pretended defender of a Protestant church, who either is, or pretends to be ignorant of the *master-argument* against Popery?

Is it worth your while to hold debate with a man who quarrels with you for calling the Non-conformists of Archbishop *Parker's* time by the name of *Puritans*, after so good an authority as *Strype*? — Or with a man who, while he is correcting your historical errors, speaks of two bishops, one of whom died while the other was a school-boy, as of one and the same man? Or lastly, with a disputant who, while he is questioning you with an *ingenuous magnanimity* concerning the sincerity of your subscription, seems not to have any feelings that ever he subscribed himself?

Yet this gentleman seems to set himself up as advocate-general for the clergy of the church of *England*. Is it credible that a respectable body, among whom are many, I trust very many, learned, rational, pious, liberal-minded divines, would chuse such a one for their representative?

The laborious compiler of certain *Conferences* in the *London Magazine* might perhaps think himself slighted, were he to be passed by without some acknowledgement of by-past obligations.

This *Dialogist* hath thought fit to distinguish the Author of the Confessional with the very civil appellation of *Stafotes*, a term of the same import with *Tertullus's* *caeriv xivvula*, applied to St. *Paul*: for which compliment he would deserve particular thanks from the said author, if he had not in so many passages, made this same *Stafotes* talk like an idiot, purely for the comfort of confusing him with a suitable assortment of *Replies*.

The *candent* Dr. *Ibbetson*, were he cool enough to be handled, would deserve, among others, to be held up to the admiration of the critics, particularly for his extremely knack of composing *e*-ditions and *ad*-ditions by echoing the language of his adversary. Nothing however strikes me so much as his being able to temper so high a degree of *zeal*, with so very low a degree of *humility*. Witness his condescending to retail against the Author of the Confessional the following very piteous anecdote.

"A certain prelate *lamenting*, not very long
 "since, that the clergy of the church of *Eng-*
 "land do not meet with the *same respect* from
 "the laity, as the clergy of the *Romish* church:
 "to whom this *church-champion*, who accidentally
 "sat at his right hand in a large company, re-
 "plied, He hoped they never would."

By the way, who or what can this Author of the Confessional be? A while ago he was a mere

Recluse,

Recluse, brooding in the dark corner of his library, and totally unacquainted with the men and times in which he lives. Anon we find him at the right hand of a prelate in a public company, and passing his word about as alert as any of them.

But to the anecdote. Which shall we admire most? the strength of the Doctor's judgement, or the strength of his *faith*? Who could give credit to a tale which carries along with it such an indisputable mark of an impudent forgery, not from any precarious presumption of what the Author of the Confessional might or might not say on such an occasion, but from an absolute certainty that there is not a prelate of the established church, either of *England* or *Ireland*, who would not think it the highest reflection upon his good sense to have any such LAMENTATION ascribed to him.

In the course of the controversy occasioned by the Confessional, some mention has been dropped of a *writing Inquisition*, an expression which many persons have been at a loss to understand. Some have thought it might refer to an *Index expurgatorius*; others have fallen upon different conjectures. It now appears to be an *Holy Office*, where suspected persons are *interrogated* concerning the import of their subscriptions, and where, if they do not give satisfaction, the signal is immediately thrown

thrown out to pelt them with *Doubts, Prefaces, Conferences, Anecdotes, Addresses**, and so forth.

And lest these should not take place on the present culprit, he is admonished with something of a menacing air, that he may expect farther remarks on his book, by the important hand above-mentioned. All in good time. May the Remarker's health and leisure enable him to bring them forth; and may he profit by the hints we have imparted of the *Slips* he hath made in his remarks on the preface (some of them not mentioned, *miseranda vel hosti*), and finish his *second* remarks with a little more circumspection, and a little more of something else, than is to be found in his *first*. Which is the worst that I wish him.

I make no doubt but the critical accumulation of so many publications against the Confessional, one upon the back of another, within the compass of a very few weeks, and after a pretty long intermission, hath been remarked both by the friends and enemies of that book. Perhaps the former may not be apprised of the *good policy* of this *manœuvre*. Let us try to explain it. Besides the immediate benefit of *suffocation*, which might be expected from such heaps of heavy matter, every one must be sensible that an *an-*

* See an *Address* to the Author of the Confessional in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1767; and compare the contents with Dr. Rutherford's *Defence* of his *Charge* on the same subject.

juer which should take in *all* the strictures of these several antagonists, would make a book as big again, at least, as the Confessional. And if the Author was *ten* or *eleven* years in *training* or *brooding* over that work, it must of course be *twenty*, before such answer could be completed: and by that time the Author himself, and the far greater part of his opponents, may be gathered to their fathers in peace, and the latter eased of all apprehensions of being disturbed in the interval, with proposals and solicitations for a farther reformation.

This however may not altogether depend on the *tardy talents* of the Author of the Confessional. There may be others who are as little convinced, as the said Author is by the arguments brought against him, that his adversaries have made out their case, and who are well able to give their reasons in writing, upon shorter notice. Some such have already appeared, who, without making themselves answerable for the errors or the defects of the Confessional, have done full justice to the cause of Christian Liberty, to the entire satisfaction of all the friends and lovers of it, and with great honour to themselves. Some such, I trust, there ever will be, while the gospel of the GOD OF TRUTH is preached, and the light of it afforded in this land of Liberty.

And

And while things continue among us in this state, the cause espoused by the Author of the Confessional cannot be a matter of indifference. If it is *not* defensible upon the principles of that Gospel, the sooner it is suppressed the better. If it is, the triumph of its adversaries can be of no long duration. And by that time the greater part of his opponents may be gathered to their fathers in peace, and the inner circle of all apprehensions of being disturbed in the interval, with proposals and solicitations for a farther reformation.

This however may not altogether depend on the tardy talents of the Author of the Confessional. There may be others who are as little convinced, as the said Author is by the arguments brought against him, that his adversaries have made out their case, and who are well able to give their reasons in writing, upon shorter notice. Some such have already appeared, who without making themselves answerable for the errors or the defects of the Confessional, have done full justice to the Christian Liberty, to the entire satisfaction of all the friends and lovers of it, and with great honour to themselves. Some such I trust, there ever will be, while the Gospel of the God of truth is preached, and the light of it afforded in the land of Liberty.

